

Woodsmoke Reduction Program – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How does the program work, in a nutshell?

A: Turn in an application to your local Air District, along with a photo of your old woodstove, fireplace insert or open-hearth fireplace and any other necessary paperwork (Owner/Tenant Agreement Form or documentation of eligibility for a low-income Enhanced Voucher). Complete applications are processed in the order they are received by the Air District. If you qualify and Vouchers are still available, you will receive a Voucher for either \$1,000 or \$3,500 that is good for 4 weeks. Within 4 weeks, take that Voucher to a participating retailer and use it toward the purchase, permitting and installation of an EPA-Certified wood stove or insert, a natural gas or propane heating device, or an electric heating device. The installation should be completed within 90 days of redeeming the voucher.

Q: How do I know if I qualify for an Enhanced Voucher amount?

A: You qualify for an Enhanced Voucher (\$3,500) if you live in a designated disadvantaged or low-income census tract. The California Air Resources Board's website has a good map of designated AB 1550 low-income census tracts. Visit <https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/lowincomemapfull.htm>. You can zoom in to your area or enter your address in the search bar. Everyone living in an area mapped as blue, pink, tan or striped automatically qualifies for a \$3,500 Enhanced Voucher.

You also qualify for an Enhanced Voucher if your total household income is at or below 80% of the Statewide Median Household Income (\$51,026 for 2018 and until new data are published by the Census Bureau); or if you participate in a federal or State low-income assistance program such as WIC, LIHEAP or CARE; or you qualify under the California Department of Housing and Community Development grant funding income limits (available at <http://hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/income-limits/state-and-federal-income-limits/docs/inc2k18.pdf>), as determined by the California Air Resources Board.

Q: How do I demonstrate that I am low-income?

A: You can submit pay stubs, tax returns or an employer's income statement for every person in the household. Once eligibility is established, the Air District will either return or destroy your income documentation.

Q: How do I know if my wood stove is EPA-Certified or not?

A: For the current change-out program, only non-certified wood stoves are eligible for replacement funding. These stoves are pre-1988. Beginning 1988, all wood stoves were required to have a permanent label indicating that they are EPA-Certified as meeting either Phase I or Phase II emission standards. This label is generally on the back of the wood stove. A flashlight and mirror may be helpful in searching your stove to make sure there is no EPA-Certified label anywhere on it. When the retailer/installer visits your residence to perform a cost estimate, he or she will verify the stove's eligibility.

Q: What if my wood stove is EPA-Certified but it's worn out and doesn't burn cleanly?

A: Unfortunately, only stoves that were never EPA-Certified are eligible for funding through the current program. The air districts hope that future year programs will be able to fund change-outs of worn out Certified wood stoves.

Q: How do I submit my application packet?

A: You may mail, email or hand-deliver your packet.

Q: Who is eligible to participate?

A: Anybody in a participating county who maintains a residence and uses an old, non-EPA Certified (pre-1988) wood stove or fireplace as a primary source of heat.

Q: How do you define a “primary source of heat”?

A: If you use your old wood heating device for at least half of your home heating, it is considered a primary source of heat. Documentation may be required (see next question).

Q: How can I document that I use wood as a primary source of heat?

A: Air districts and retailers are required to verify that your old wood-fired heating device is eligible for replacement funding, which includes making a reasonable effort to ensure that it is used as a primary source of heat, or else program funding is placed in jeopardy. There are several ways to document that you heat primarily with wood. If your wood heating device is your only source of heat (excluding small, electric space heaters), then it is obvious. However, if you also have another heat source, such as an electric, propane or natural gas heating device, more detailed documentation may be required by your air district.

Ways you can substantiate your statement that you use primarily wood for heat are many and various, and may include one or more of the following: receipts from purchasing firewood; photos of your wood storage area; utility bills showing less than a 25% increase during winter months versus during summer months; a signed statement from your firewood dealer that you have purchased at least 2 cords of wood in a year; a photo of your firewood cutting/splitting area showing heavy usage; signed statements from neighbors; receipts for chainsaw repair and maintenance, bar and chain oil or new chains for your chainsaw; a firewood cutting permit; and receipts from a chimney sweeping service. You do not have to demonstrate that wood is a primary heat source for your application to be deemed complete, but please be prepared to provide evidence to support your claim that your wood-fired heating device is a primary source of heat in case your air district asks for such documentation.

Q: Are mobile homes and vacation homes eligible?

A: Yes, as long as the device being replaced is a non-EPA Certified wood stove, fireplace insert or open-hearth fireplace that is used as a primary source of heat. For a mobile home, please contact your Air District – additional information is needed.

Q: I live in an area that already has a local wood stove change-out incentive program. Can I double-dip and take advantage of both programs?

A: This depends on your local Air District’s policy and the policy of the other change-out program administrator.

Q: What counties are participating in this regionally consistent program?

A: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Nevada, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Sutter, Tehama and Yuba County

Q: Can I purchase a heating device from a retailer in another county?

A: The Air District for your area has a list of Participating Retailers for that particular air district. They do not have to be located within that district. You may redeem your voucher through any of the retailers on your district's Participating Retailers list.

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